

PIGEONS FOR THE NAVY.

The new United States cruiser New York is to have as an addition to her equipment a cote for pigeons for messenger service, the outfit to be presented to the cruiser by George W. Childs. The cote when completed will be furnished with carrier pigeons from the lofts of those who at one time or another during the past five years have held prizes offered by Mr. Childs for the best day's work.

Many ideas have been advanced regarding the possibility of communicating between a vessel at sea, out of sight of land, and the shore she had left, some of which have been chimerical in the extreme, while others have had some scientific merit, at least in theory. Most of these ideas relate in some way to electricity, but of course the difficulty has been and always must be to establish a fixed and definite road for the electric fluid to travel. Then, too, flash lights have been suggested, which should be reflected from the clouds and thus become visible beyond the horizon, but the clouds unfortunately cannot be made to order, nor do they cover the sky at the time when they might be made useful as reflectors.

Taking it all in all, the carrier-pigeon plan seems to present more chances of success than any yet represented. The wonderful instinct of these birds, if it be instinct which guides them to their home, and the power they possess of rapid and sustained flight, render it an easy matter for a ship crossing either ocean to communication with her home port in an emergency, and indeed, by carrying two cotes of pigeons, homing on opposite sides of the ocean, to communicate with either shore at pleasure.

The chief use of carrier pigeons in this capacity would be naturally to send to land news of disaster and appeals for assistance, and in this regard the birds would be of more practical value in the merchant marine than in the navy, that is, in time of peace. In time of war the navy could utilize them, perhaps, but even then only under exceptional circumstances. A man of war meeting an enemy's vessel must either fight or run away, and in either event aid from a shore distant, perhaps, a thousand miles or more, would arrive too late to be of any use.

On the other hand, it would seem especially appropriate that the passenger steamers should carry them. When the Umbria was delayed in the Atlantic and the Pekin in the Pacific a carrier-pigeon message would have relieved a world of anxiety on the part of relatives and friends of those on board the missing steamers, and in the case of the Naronic, now conceded to be lost, not only might the mystery of her fate have been solved, but possibly assistance could have been rendered and many lives saved.

It will do no harm to introduce a carrier-pigeon service into the navy, but it will do no special good. One thing is certain, unless the cotes are closely watched there will be diminution in the number of the birds, for Jacky will not make any distinction from gastronomic points of view between carrier pigeons and pigeons of any other variety, and will not be slow to add to his meal of hard tack, salt horse and lobscouse if occasion serves.—*Chronicle*.

A DUKE AND A DUCHESS.

Plans for a Swell Entertainment at the Fair.

NEW YORK, April 10.—The preliminary work of the Chamber of Commerce committee on visitors to the World's Fair is about completed. The plans for an entertainment to the Duke and Duchess de Veragua to be given on their arrival are completed. This will be in the form of a reception in which ladies will participate in rooms on the lower floor of the Hotel Waldorf, which will accommodate from 1500 to 2000 persons; also a banquet to the naval officers of foreign vessels and our own fleet, who will participate in the water parade in New York on April 5th.

A committee of citizens have completed arrangements for a grand ball at Madison-square Garden. The Secretary of the Navy and Admiral Gherardi have accepted both these invitations and Madison-square Garden has been secured for either the 27th or 28th, at the choice of the committee. Mr. Stevens has completed his subscription list for \$20,000 by personal application to members of the chamber, and the general notice recently issued is being so liberally responded to that there is little doubt that the sum of \$25,000, which was the outside figure named at the first meeting of the committee, will be subscribed and the list closed this week.

Stars And Warming Pans.

An enthusiastic merchant in Honolulu is selling American flags with forty-five stars—one being for Hawaii. It came about in this way. In ordering the flags, he facetiously added a postscript to his letter, suggesting that the manufacturer might as well put in an extra star, as the islands would probably be annexed by the time the flags arrived. The flags came in due time and he was filled with dismay when counting the stars to find that the maker had missed the joke and taken the order for an extra star in dead earnest. Annexation sentiment is so strong, however, that the Hawaiian star serves to bring in customers, and the stock is fast disappearing. This was an experiment as pleasing in its results as that of "Lord" Timothy Dexter, an ignorant and eccentric person of New Hampshire, who sent at one time a shipload of warming pans to Cuba, not knowing that the climate there was a trifle milder than at his own home. The people of Cuba took kindly to the warming pans, which they found very useful in cooking their meals, the long handles enabling them to stand further from the fire. Hit is often as profitable as good wit.—*San Diego Union*.

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